



Communicable Disease Branch Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Weekly Key Points

April 28, 2020

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) Communicable Disease Branch will be releasing COVID-19 weekly key points that includes information discussed on the weekly Tuesday Local Health Department call. As guidance changes, please use the most recent information provided. For questions, contact the NC DPH Communicable Disease Branch 24/7 Epidemiologist on Call at **919-733-3419**.

Important Updates

- **NEW** [Ongoing Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings by Facility](#)
- **NEW** [LHD Investigation Steps For Outbreaks in Large Food Processing Facilities](#)
- **NEW** [Checklist for Initial Meetings with Food Processing Facilities](#)
- **NEW** NCDHHS Announces [Carolina Community Tracing Collaborative](#)
- Update CDC and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Interim Guidance for Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers](#)
- Update [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)

Upcoming Events

- **COVID-19 Infection Prevention in County Jails, Thursday April 30, 1:30–2:30pm**
Link to join Webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/92591527644>
Office telephone: (312) 626-6799 or (646) 558-8656
Webinar ID: 925 9152 7644
iPhone: +13126266799,,92591527644# or +16465588656,,92591527644#
- **COVID-19 Infection Prevention in State Prisons, Thursday April 30, 3:00–4:00pm**
Link to join Webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/98354542522>
Office telephone: (312) 626-6799 or (646) 558-8656
Webinar ID: 983 5454 2522
iPhone: +13126266799,,98354542522# or +16465588656,,98354542522#
- **COVID-19 Contact Tracing Rollout and Feedback: Friday May 1, 2020, 10–11:30am**
Link to join Webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/95273924286>
Office telephone: (312) 626-6799 or (646) 558-8656
Webinar ID: 952 7392 4286
iPhone: +13126266799,,95273924286#
- **Zoom Office Hours: Friday May 1, 2020, 9:00–10:15am** with Jill D. Moore, Associate Professor of Public Law & Government, UNC School of Government
The topics for the call are:
 - Disclosures of information about COVID cases or deaths in congregate living settings, such as long-term care facilities
 - Disclosures of information to employers who have outbreaks in their facilities
 - Disclosing county-specific data about cases and deathsJoin Zoom Meeting: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/95638026566>
Meeting ID: 956 3802 6566
If you prefer phone audio, use one of these numbers:
+13126266799,,95638026566# US (Chicago)
+19294362866,,95638026566# US (New York)



Contact Tracing

NC DHHS is partnering with Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC), the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (NC AHEC), and local health departments to expand contact tracing staff and provide training. NC DHHS is continuing to work on how to structure LHD requests for staff and build local connections with CCNC staff. We are working on how to structure LHD requests for staff and connections between LHD staff and CCNC staff.

Coming soon

- This week – announcement about the software for contact tracing management
- This week – a staffing estimator tool for LHDs
- Early to mid-May – Software and training available for LHDs

COVID-19 Outbreaks

Congregate Living Settings

On Monday April 27, 2020, NC DHHS began posting the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths associated with ongoing outbreaks in congregate living settings, by facility name. Beginning this Friday May 1, 2020, this public report will also include a breakdown of the number of cases and deaths in residents and staff in each of these facilities. NC DHHS will update these data on the website twice weekly, on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

Data for this report will come from the Results question package in the NC EDSS Outbreak Events. Important data fields that will need to be updated are:

- Date of earliest illness onset
- Date of last illness onset
- Facility name
- Facility type
- Number of cases in residents and staff (please note: the variable in the results package is “number ill”, but please enter the number of positive cases)
- Number of deaths in residents and staff

Other important information to ensure data quality and accuracy in this report:

- The number of cases linked to the NC EDSS outbreak event needs to equal the total number of cases documented in the results package. Do not link negative cases in NC EDSS.

Notifications of an Outbreak

1. If you need guidance, outbreaks should be reported by calling the Epi on call at 919-733-3419.
2. If you are already familiar with the guidance, you can submit the outbreak worksheet to the Epi on Call in a Word document or PDF at the following address: CDOutbreakWorksheet@dhhs.nc.gov. As a reminder: please do not place any protected health information in the worksheet; use the patients' NC EDSS event ID on the worksheet.
3. The Epi on call will create an outbreak event and SITREP sharing the outbreak event ID with you.

End of an Outbreak

In a congregate living setting, a COVID-19 outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory-confirmed cases within two incubation periods. An outbreak is considered over after 28 days have passed since the most recent date of illness identification, indicated by the latest onset date in a symptomatic case or the last date of specimen collection in an asymptomatic case, whichever is later.



When an outbreak is over:

1. Fill out the date it was declared over in the administrative package in the NC EDSS outbreak
2. Ensure all question packages have complete information
3. Assign to the outbreak to the state

Coming soon to NC EDSS

- A variable for date of specimen collection for the last asymptomatic positive case
 - Until the variable is created, please document the date of collection for the last asymptomatic positive case in the notes section of the event dashboard.
- A table and/or additional variables for the number of symptomatic and asymptomatic positive and negative results by residents and staff
 - Currently, this table can be emailed to your regional TATP nurse or attached to the outbreak event in NC EDSS.

NC Farmworker Health Program

The North Carolina Farmworker Health Program (NCFHP) is a statewide Migrant Health Voucher Program within the North Carolina Office of Rural Health. NCFHP works with local agencies to provide care throughout the state to meet the needs of geographical areas with localized densities of farmworkers.

Farm work is consistently ranked among the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Additionally, farmworkers can suffer from chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, putting them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Farmworkers who live in migrant camps, typically range between 10–15 people, but some camps are as large as 200 persons. COVID-19 can spread rapidly in these types of congregate living settings.

Farmworkers are a unique population given the many barriers to healthcare access, such as language barriers, lack of independent transportation, lack of insurance, fear regarding immigration status, and unfamiliarity with local resources and systems. Farmworker health clinics bridge those gaps. It is especially important for local health departments to partner with the farmworker health clinics in their communities when investigating outbreaks of COVID-19 in these communities.

North Carolina's host farmers for the H2A and H2B farmworker programs are required (by OSHA standards) to report any suspect or confirmed communicable diseases to the local health department. Please assure the LHD staff are aware and can utilize this notification as an opportunity to quickly initiate an outbreak investigation and implement infection control measures, in collaboration with local farmworker health clinics.

Additional information

- [Map of the Farmworker Health Clinics in North Carolina](#)
- NC DHHS Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Migrant Farmworkers, their Employers, and Housing Providers [English](#), [Spanish](#)
- Contact: Elizabeth Freeman, Director of the NC Farmworker Health Program, Office of Rural Health at Elizabeth.freeman@dhhs.nc.gov.